UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Radio Service
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

Housekeepers' Chat

Thursday, February 6, 1930

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Handkerchief Hygiene." Information approved by Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletins available: "Homes for Birds," "Gourds for Bird Houses and Other Purposes," "Leather Shoes--Their Selection and Care." The loose-leaf household account book may be purchased for 50 cents from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

--ooOoo--

I hope you are all in a business-like frame of mind today, for we are going to waste no time in preliminaries. There are important questions to answer, and a nice letter to read. If you like to jot down the names of bulletins I mention, have your pencils handy.

First thing, here's the letter. It's from a friend who heard the talk I gave Tuesday about "The Common Cold, and How to Prevent It."

"Dear Aunt Sammy," she writes. "Doctor Krause gave us some good information all right, about the common cold. If you don't mind, I'd like to supplement his lecture with a few words of my own. I'll promise to be brief. Last month I caught a bad cold. 'Oh dear!' sighed the stenographer member of my family. 'Now I suppose every one of us is doomed to catch cold, since you have started it. Might as well be resigned to the fact that I'll have to miss a week's work.'

"Well, I thought to myself, 'How silly!' Why should everybody else in the family suffer, because I was careless enough to catch cold? Why not use a little common sense, and prevent the spread of this obnoxious disease? At least I can wash my handkerchiefs separately, or better still, use paper handkerchiefs, or pieces of old linen that can be burned. I'll use extreme care in the bath room, and not let anyone else use my towel. I'll wash out the bowl and the handles of the spigots, with hot water and soap. I'll see that the dishes are washed unusually carefully, in plenty of hot soapy water, and scalded thoroughly. I won't let the napkins get mixed, as they do occasionally. These are only a few of the ways which occurred to me, of keeping my family free from colds. So many women, and men too, think that if one member of the household gets a cold, they'll <u>all</u> get it. Fate, or something! Fate? Just plain carelessness!

"I'm sure you'll think I'm a reformer or a crusader, or a soap-box orator -- but won't you say something about office workers, suffering from colds, who leave rumpled handkerchiefs on their desks? What is more disgusting than to go to a person's desk, and be greeted by the sight of a dirty little ball of a handkerchief! Bad manners, and bad hygiene. I suppose we are all guilty, more or less, but there's really no excuse for the practice. If you have time, Aunt

Sammy, you might read this letter, but please don't read my name. Sincerely yours, L. T. B."

That's all of the letter. Now, shall I make a confession? Before I was half through reading that letter, I had an almost uncontrollable desire to sneeze! Wouldn't that have been something?

I am heartily in accord with everything our crusading writer has written. If she wants to write me a talk, and call it "Handkerchief Hygiene," or "Handkerchief Etiquette," it's all right with me. I used to work in an office, with many other persons, and I have seen cold-carrying handkerchiefs lying around where they had no business to be.

Which reminds me of something else. Be sure to provide your children with pockets for their handkerchiefs. All the new styles in children's clothes have pockets, so that the youngsters will learn early where to keep their handkerchiefs. Last week I was talking with a young woman connected with the nursery school in Washington,D.C. She found that mothers sent their children to school with handkerchiefs in strange places -- in very strange places, indeed.

And that reminds me further--I must visit the Bureau of Home Economics, and see the new styles they're working out in children's clothing, for the spring of 1930. "Man works from sun to sun -- Aunt Sammy's work is never done." Not much poetry in that -- but a great deal of truth.

We must be getting on, to the questions. Even though it is February, and past the traditional month of good resolutions, there have been many,many requests for information on budgeting. "Please tell me," writes a radio friend,"what the 50 cent loose-leaf household account book is like."

The account book has loose leaves, and a marginal index, for each class of expenditure. It begins by stating in detail what should be entered under each of ten heads: Food, housing, operating expenses; furnishings and equipment, clothing, health, development, personal, automobile, savings and insurance. There is a double page for estimate of expenditures, month by month. There are several pages for each of the ten classes of expense. Then there are other pages for information which is not part of your expense account, but which you need in connection with family finances -- a list of insurance policies with premium dates; accounts payable and receivable; property owned; and a household inventory. The farm woman will use the special places for recording garden products, eggs and poultry, preserves and canned goods. The city woman will not use these pages, of course.

To avoid confusion, all entries should be made by one person, usually the wife. A conference should be held once a month to check up what you spent with what you intended to spend. If the children "sit in" on this conference, they will see better why they can't have everything they'd like to have.

I could go on, for an hour, talking about the virtues of this loose-leaf household account book, but if you are interested I know you will send for it. Please send your 50 cents to the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

The next question is from a boy who wants plans for a bird-house. Step right this way, please, I have just what you want -- a charming rustic bungalow for Jenny Wren -- who is not overly particular where she lives. Almost any shady or partly sunlit spot about the dooryard or orchard will please the wren family.

Plans for the wren house, and for many others, are in the bulletin, "Homes for Birds." This bulletin also tells how to protect birds from cats. By the way, do you know that gourds can be used for bird houses? The other day I was looking over my supply of government bulletins, when I found an interesting little two-page leaflet called "Gourds for Bird Houses and Other Uses." Historically, gourds are among the oldest of the cultivated plants. One type of gourd, used as a water flask, has been found in Egyptian tombs of the Twelfth Dynasty, or about 2200 or 2400 years before the birth of Christ.

If you want to learn more about gourds, and how to make bird homes from them, write for the leaflet, "Gourds for Bird Houses and Other Purposes."

Next question: "Please tell me how to waterproof a pair of work shoes." The answer to this is in the bulletin about "Leather Shoes." It has four different formulas for water-proofing shoes.

The last question is about the care of linoleum. As you know, there are three general types of linoleum on the market -- plain, inlaid and printed. There's a great deal of wear on my dining room floor, and for that reason I bought the best grade of inlaid linoleum I could afford. Inlaid linoleum is so made that the color in each part of the designs extends clear to the backing, and the pattern will last as long as the linoleum itself. Waxing or varnishing is said to improve the appearance of linoleum, and make it last longer. Wax should be used on the inlaid and plain kinds, and varnish on the printed ones, for wax sometimes tends to soften the printed surface. If either of these finishes is applied the linoleum should be cleaned and cared for like a wood floor, so finished.

If linoleum is not given a wax or varnish finish, it should be swept with a soft brush, and dusted with an oiled or dry mop. Occasionally it should be cleaned more thoroughly, with a cloth wrung out of suds made with likewarm water and neutral soap. Then it should be rinsed with clear water, and wiped dry with another cloth. Only a small space should be wet at one time. A linoleum-covered floor should never be flooded. Strong soaps and cleaning powders that contain alkali injure linoleum, and should never be used on it. Whenever any kind of cleaning powder is used on a particularly dirty spot, care should be taken to remove any trace of the water, in which the powder was dissolved.

Casters on heavy furniture are likely to cut into the linoleum. I had the casters on my furniture replaced by glass shoes, with wide bearing surfaces, and no rough edges. In moving these heavy pieces of furniture across the linoleum I take the added precaution of placing an old rug or carpet under them.

Friday: "Roast Pork with Apricot Stuffing."

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